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young men are very fond of adorning their hair with ostrich or other fine feathers.

CLOTHING AND ORNAMENTS

The men and generally also unmarried girls go naked. In recent times many men wear a cotton cloth, which is knotted on the left shoulder, and slung round the right hip; chiefly people living near the mission have partly adopted this clothing; the desire to possess such a cotton-cloth is a stimulus for many a Shilluk to work for a few days or weeks in the mission-compound; the number of those who do so is apparently increasing. Animal-skins are generally not worn by men as an every-day dress. Women, and sometimes girls are dressed in cow, calf, or antelope skins, which are either wrapped round the body, or hung over the shoulder.

[The full dress of a woman is described by Mrs. Giffen in "The Egyptian Sudan" as follows: First of all there is a small apron. This is a piece of coarse cloth — originally white — about two feet long and eighteen inches wide. It is made of two thicknesses, and it is tied by strings fastened to two corners around the waist, but just below the abdomen, and falls down to the knees.

Then there are two skins, of sheep, goat, calf, gazelle or whatever it may be, tanned with the hair on, and worn with the hair side out. One of these is tied around the waist, using one foreleg and one hindleg of the skin for strings to tie with. The tail and the other two legs — or the skin of them — dangle and flap around the legs as ornaments. Indeed these are sometimes ornamented with beads, brass or iron rings. This skin is tied in front so as to show the white apron underneath.

The other skin is worn on the upper part of the body. The fore and hind legs on one side are fastened together at their very tips; this is then slipped over the head, the legs of the skin thus tied together resting on the right shoulder, and the other side passing under the left arm. This is the full dress of a woman. Of course in addition to this they may wear as many beads and other ornaments as they can afford; strings of beads around the waist, neck, and arms, and armlets, of brass; sometimes as many as ten or twelve brass or iron rings, weighing several pounds, and extending from the hand half way to the elbow. These are not loose, but drawn tight to the flesh, and each made fast by the blacksmith. Similar rings of iron are often worn by the elder women on the ankle. These are very heavy and produce great knots in the flesh.

The little girls wear the apron only, and when a little older, put on the shoulder skin, and when full grown wear the skin about the waist.]

When meeting for a dance both sexes are richly dressed. While present at

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a great dance. I have noted the ornaments and clothings worn by the young men and girls on the occasion. They are *a)* for the men: above the ankles a strip of sheep or goat skin with the hair on it outside; the same just below the knee; above it are the knee-bells, a number of metal bells each consisting in a hollow, oblong piece of iron, in which a small iron ball moves, thus producing a rattling noise; about the loins there is a skin of leopard, gepard, wild cat, or jackal, suspended on a eight to twelve-fold girdle of ostrich egg shells; the girdle may also consist of European beads; on the wrist a bracelet of brass or iron, above the elbow an ivory ring, above it a six- to eight-fold ring of ambach; about the neck they wear one or more necklaces of beads; on the head ornaments of horse-tail or other long hair, and ostrich feathers; round the forehead strips of red or white bristles are fastened; each man holds two lances, two clubs, one club-shield, the lances generally being adorned with ostrich-plumes; sometimes the skin-cloth round the waist is adorned with bells or iron chains. Face, arms, and the upper part of the body are smeared with red earth, over wich melted butter is poured and stripes of ashes are drawn. Several, if not all, of the dancers carry a dancing-stick, a long stick, bent at its upper end like the handle of a walking stick, and covered with brass or some other metal. *b)* The girls present the following appearance: above the ankles a bundle of heavy iron rings, on the loins a large antelope- or more frequently calf-akin suspended by a bundle of ostrich egg shell chains; round the neck and hanging down on the breasts a large bundle of blue or green beads; on the wrists bracelets of beads; round the forehead a string of beads; the hair is sometimes dressed on the occasion; in the hair an ostrich or some other good feather is stuck, in one or two cases I saw even flowers instead of a feather; the girls are not painted, only anointed with oil.

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The most characteristic adornments of the men are thick, heavy bracelets and armlets of iron, brass, ivory, twisted ambach, tree-bark, and cowrie shells. A wreath consisting of a strip of skin with the hair on the outside is laid round the head. Rings of metal, ambach, cowrie or bark are worn above the ankle. Women and girls also wear armlets, but not ivory ones. The legs below the knee are loaded with heavy metal rings. Men as well as women, but chiefly the latter, pierce their ears at the top, and wear rings of brass or iron in them; sometimes merely a piece of metal or a stick is fastened in them. Both sexes wear strings of ostrich egg shells about the loins; besides these chains of cowries, of river shells, of leather, and of varied beads are frequent. Many grown-up men and youths wear a necklace of a peculiar kind of small, well-shaped, and marble-like stones, which have about the size of a pigeon-egg; they are very much valued, and the natives always ask an ox in exchange for them. These

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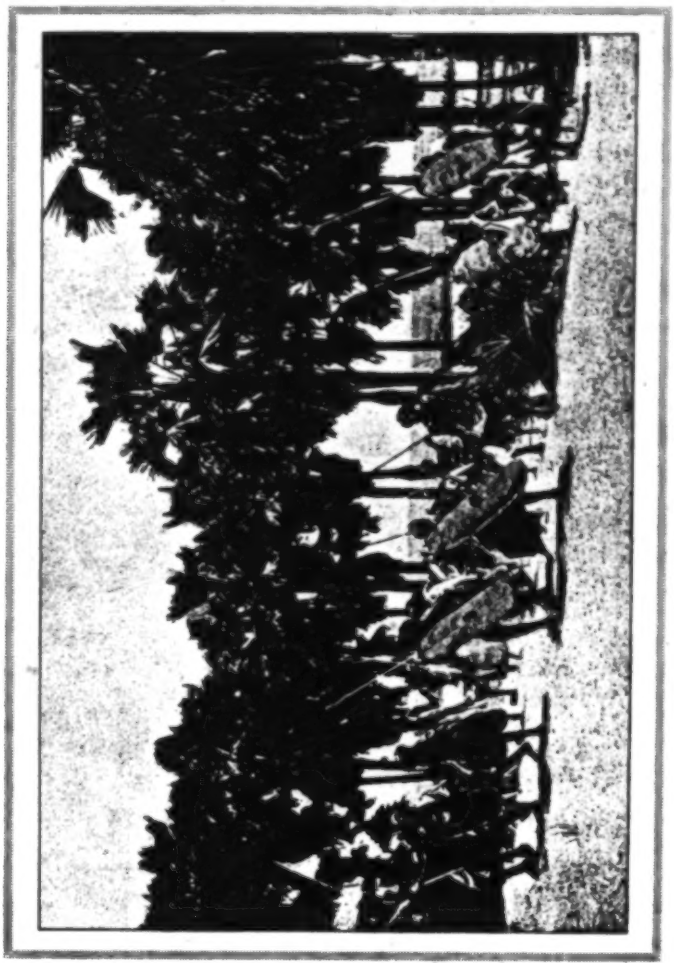

Shilluk war dance at Doleib Hill

[Facing p. xxxvi (B)]

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428 587 763 517 [361] [237] 825 75 [203] 535 [574]

INHERITANCE

The sons inherit the property of their father. The wives of the deceased father are divided among the children, who may, and in most cases do, marry them, except their own mother. It is said that sometimes, when a husband is very old and infirm, his wives put him to death, in order to get a younger companion. On inheritance vide page 113.

DANCING AND WAR-PLAYS

Their chief amusement is dancing. The houses of a village are built in a circle, leaving an open place in their midst. Here the inhabitants assemble in the evening, stretching themselves in the warm ashes or on a skin, or squatting on a piece of ambach; several small fires of cow dung are burning and spread a smoke of strong smell, which is the best protection from mosquito-stings. The events of the day are discussed here, the tobacco pipe and merisa pot going from hand to hand. In the middle of this open place the trunk of a large tree is erected, in which the drums are suspended. With them signals are given in times of danger, but more frequently they are used to accompany the dances of the young people. These public dances are among the greatest events in the lives of the young Shilluks; even old men and women, though not taking an active part, are highly interested in them; sitting before the huts in front of the dancers they constitute a chorus, who accompanies the transactions of the younger generation with loud acclamations or blamings. The dances generally take place during the dry season; they begin at about four o'clock in the afternoon, or, in case there is moonshine, later in the evening, and last from three to five hours or longer. As a rule one village invites its neighbours by a drum signal given in the early morning of the day fixed for a dance. On hearing this signal the young people show a great zeal in preparing their body, hair-dress and the ornaments worn on the occasion. They go to the village in groups or single, men and girls separately. Usually the youths perform some war-dance in full arms at first, in which the girls do not partake; they form a large circle in four or two rows, and while the drum is being beaten, begin dancing and singing war songs. The dance consists in jumping on the toe and at the same time moving slowly forward. These rhythmical movements are from time to time interrupted by a group of dancers violently rushing out of the circle, howling and shouting aloud, brandishing their spears with fierce looks, and performing mock fights or playing pantomimes, in which they exhibit very remarkable ability. Scenes from the hunting, pastoral and agricultural life are represented with such a dramatic vivacity that they richly deserve the applause they earn.

On a given signal, spears, clubs and shields are laid aside and put together in one place, and now the second part, in which the girls partake, begins. The latter have till then been waiting in a separate place, where the female lookers-on are gathered. Each girl selects her own dancer. First the men form again a

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535 circle. Then the girls rush into this ring, each looking out for the man she intends to favour. She draws up in front of him, so that they look each other in the face; again two or four rows are formed, and the same dance begins anew, accompanied by drumming and singing.

The dances are in many cases repeated on four successive afternoons or nights; on the fourth day they frequently end in quarrels or real fights. The cause of this is the young men of one village casting their eyes on the girls of another village, and thus arousing jealousy. In such fights clubs are used, in exceptional cases also spears.

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535 54/ [Of a great war-play which was performed in honour of the missionaries, Dr. Giffen in "The Egyptian Sudan" gives the following description: "The first intimation we had of their coming, or rather of their presence, was a whoop and the sound of a horn that sent a chill, and kept it shooting up and down the spinal column. We rushed out on the veranda, and saw at the foot of our hill, and only a few rods away, that the clans had assembled. There were about one hundred men and boys with their spears and war clubs, their bodies shining with oil, and their spears shining from vigorous rubbing, while their faces were hideous with white and red paint of brick-dust and ashes. They kept leaping in the air, yelling and blowing that soul-sickening horn. Little by little they came toward us, stooping low, hiding behind trees, gliding back and forth until they were in front of the house. Then I stepped out and smiled at them, while suddenly with a yell that was not earthly, they sprang in the air, the first line made as if throwing the spear, and suddenly dropped down for the following ranks. Again they all sprang up into the air, yelling, dancing, singing, and brandishing spears, then circled around the house and attacked from another quarter.

These manoeuvers were kept up for some time, and they grew more excited and more wild all the while. Then, at a command from their chief, they ceased and began to dance. Dancing with the Shulla (Shilluk) means jumping up and down in the same spot, accompanied with a sort of chanting sing-song, throwing the arms over their heads and flourishing spears and clubs.

Again they formed in line of battle, five ranks deep, with a front of twenty, each man with spear and shield. The horn sounded the advance, and away they charged to the Doctor's house. They seemed to get the very spirit of murder in their faces. They charged in good order; the front rank, striking at an imaginary foe, dropped to their knees to allow the other ranks to strike over their heads, and then the horn sounded the

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retreat. Around our house they went in a regular stampede, and forming in a line again in front of the house for another charge.

This they repeated a number of times. Then a crowd of women, who had followed their husbands and sweethearts to battle, acted the part of foe, only to be overcome by the brave warriors and driven back. This part was very amusing. One old body with great bravery marched out and charged, using her pipe as her weapon. The men were a bit rough in driving her back, and she was evidently afraid her dear pipe would come to grief, so she took it inside our house and when next we saw her she was in the thick of a fray with a long weed as her weapon of offence and defence".]

The dry season is also the time for travelling. Relatives pay mutual visits, and marriageable young men go to the Nuers and Dinkas with spears, wire, stuffs, and dura, which they exchange for sheep and calves.

IV. RELIGION.

In the religion of the Shilluks three components are clearly distinguishable: 1. Jwok *(jwȯk)* or God; 2. Nyikang *(Ñíkàŋ́)*, the progenitor and national hero of the Shilluks; 3. ajwogo *(àjwɔ̀gɔ́)*, the witch doctor or sorcerer. These three do not exist separate from each other, but have many relations amongst one another. There are still other forms of religious service, but they are not so prominent as the three mentioned.

"Jwok *(jwȯk)* is a supreme being, residing above". Whether he is regarded as creator is not sure. According to the sayings of some natives he surely is, but it seems probable that this belief, if there is such a one, is young, and must be traced back to Mohammedan or Christian influences. — On certain occasions an ox is killed as a sacrifice to Jwok, though this is done more frequently to Nyikang; prayers are also offered to Jwok, but according to my information, they have only one prayer to Jwok (for which vide page 171), while to Nyikang there are many. "Praying" to Jwok is expressed by a different word from that which serves for designating a prayer to Nyikang; the first is *lìmɛ* "to pray"; its original meaning is probably: to conjure. In praying to Nyikang *kwɔckɛ* "to ask for, to beg" is used. While the prayers to Nyikang are sung, and accompanied by dances, that one to Jwok is only spoken, not sung, and not accompanied by dancing. Jwok has no visible symbols or temples, nor are the prayers to him offered by a priest or sorcerer, but by the chief or village-elder.

In the heart and mind of the Shilluk Jwok does not possess a deep-rooted rank. In some way they do attribute good and evil to him, and chiefly the

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but he grasped it. He asked me to come and see if you are displeased. I have brought him, I give him to you. He is not the only one who has done such a thing, for even of old our boys have so done." If the father says, "I refused because he was small, but I am not angry," the affair is settled, and the boy returns to his home. If the father is angry, and refuses to be reconciled the boy goes home with his friend. The friend then undertakes to make a reconciliation. He gives the father a present, which is usually a sheep or a spear. If the present is refused he will send other and greater presents until the father accepts, and the acceptance implies that the son has been forgiven.

Young men who are initiated to the dance the same year usually have a kindred feeling for each other. When the village goes forth to battle, the ones initiated last and the old men are supposed to be in the rear, so that they will be protected by the stronger fighting men. In a fight, men who have been initiated the same year usually keep together, though that is not always the case. When a feud begins between two villages there are men in each faction who were initiated the same year. While the men go forth by villages, yet their fights are broken up into a number of personal combats. Many men refuse to contend against men who were initiated in their class, and when they find themselves near such men, they move on to seek different foes. On the other hand, others seek to engage men of their own class. Perhaps they follow the analogy of a family, for the most bitter fighting occurs when a family is divided.

After the young man is prepared for the dance he joins the young men of his village who are going to the dance, though he must keep in the rear. In the dances the men go through a regular form, which is largely military in nature. The novice takes part in all of these movements though he must keep to the rear. Then the mixed dances begin, and then comes the real test for the young man. In the mixed dances the woman asks the man to be her partner. Happy indeed is the young man who is asked by some woman at his first dance. He says of the first woman who asks him to dance, "She cut my cloth (kǭk lanā)." In that he refers to the skin he wears. The woman who asks him to dance cannot be a relative, nor may she be a married woman, though a girl who is engaged may ask him to dance. It is preferred that the girl asking him to dance should belong to a different sub-tribe (kwā).

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will get her a calf-skin. The mother of the girl is supposed to tie the calf-skin the first time the girl wears it to a dance. If her mother is dead, then a woman the same age as her mother ties it for her.

Some Begging Customs of the Women.

The Shilluk women seem to derive much pleasure from begging for cattle from some of the richer men of the tribe. The occasion is made a holiday for the women of the village, and they go forth in their finest clothes. If the recipient of their honour lives at some distance, the start is made early in the morning, and all the women of the village go. If there are too many women in the village, then the women of a certain age go. The women of two different villages will not unite to go on these expeditions. The proper season for these begging dances is just before the rains begin, though they may be held any time during the dry season.

The women decide upon the man to be honoured by their party before they start. Occasionally, they honour a man from their own village, but in that case they only ask for a sheep. Often they go five or six miles, and sometimes they go as far as fifteen or twenty miles. While they are gone the men must stay at home to care for the babies. Often, on such occasions, a mother will leave a tiny baby at home for the whole day. Usually, they object to leaving their babies at home, but for this event it is different.

The man to be honoured is not warned, lest he hide from them. Should the man they are seeking be absent from the village, the women hang a string of beads made from the shell of the ostrich egg (rek) in the enclosure between his two houses. When he returns, he says, "Who brought this rek?" His wife replies, "The women brought it." He asks, "What do they want?" His wife replies, "An ox." His wife says "They will return." He says, "They will find nothing." His wife replies, "So many should have something, I have children, so many women should not be refused by red lips." When the women return they usually get the ox.

Before the women start on such a trip they choose a leader, unless they already have one. She is called a baña. She has the powers of a magistrate. If any trouble occurs among the women, she acts as judge. She is crowned with the rek, as the chief of the village is crowned. In

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484 562 624 future expeditions of the same party she will be chief. In the village she has the right to judge cases that are strictly between women.

431 425 484 626 A man may refuse to give an ox, making the excuse that he has nothing to give. Then the women will mutter, saying, "He kills us by making us stand in the hot sun." They seem to think he is cheating them. The man's wife may intercede on their behalf. She will put on her husband's cloth, put a rek about her neck, anoints her body with [535 oil, and then takes the chief's spear, and dances among the women. For 513] such a display the chief will usually relent, and tell his young men to bring out the ox. He may be very churlish, and refuse to give them what they desire. They depart, muttering curses on him and his family. If in a short time sickness should occur in his family it is attributed to the ill- [753 will of these women. He sends a messenger to call them. They come 755] and get the ox. He then tells them of the sickness in his family, and the women order ashes to be brought. The women fill their hands with the ashes. They then pray after this manner, "You are God. We were refused an ox by this chief. He now has sickness. We are no longer angry at him. Permit him to escape." Next they spit on the ashes they hold in their hands, and then sprinkle them all over the members of his household. The women then depart, and the patient recovers.

431 425 [788] When the women go to a chief and he gives them an ox, they sprinkle ashes about his house as a blessing. The ox is taken to their village, and it may be killed immediately, though it is more likely to be kept for a time. When the animal is killed the brisket is given to the old men of the village. The old women take the rump, and the younger women divide the remainder of the meat.

425 556 431 A man is glad to have the women come to beg from him, even when he refuses to give them what they desire. It is a great compliment to have the women come, as it shows that his fame has spread abroad as a rich and generous man. Then, too, the ceremony is such as to feed the vanity of the man singled out for the honour. The women usually rush [533] up to the house shouting and singing his praises. They sing songs about his bravery, and tell of his virtues, but the chorus of their song usually is: "Brother, lead out that ox."

After a chief has given an ox, the women go away saying that he is a 425 fine man, and a great chief. The women seem to demand a great deal. 431 Once in a case observed, the ox was given. The women did not watch

the animal carefully, and he made his escape, and ran away. It was too much trouble for them to catch the animal, and so they went back to the old chief and demanded that he give them another animal in exchange for the one that had escaped. The new animal was given to them, and they departed. 425 431

Once some women went to dance before a chief, who was away from home. One of his followers, anxious to save the property of his master, took a whip made of hippopotamus hide, and used it freely on the women. They retreated to a considerable distance, and sat down to discuss the matter. At that time the chief returned, and he was distressed when he heard what his follower had done. He made peace with the women, and gave them the ox. [622]

Visitors from other villages are not supposed to go on these trips, nor are they allowed to eat of the meat when the animal is killed. When a woman is married and goes to the village of her husband, she is not allowed to go on these begging trips until after she has lived there a full year. The women might consent, but her husband would be angry, as it might lead to her being led astray. She does not have the right to return to her old home and go with her old friends on their begging expeditions. Women in the advanced stages of pregnancy are not permitted to go on these trips. 425 484 593 [843]

These dances are a great diversion for the women. They are looked upon as memorable occasions. The chief visited may not be in a financial position to afford to give the ox, and yet he gets full value for the animal in the prestige it gives him. 425 556 535

The women have another begging custom that is suggestive of Ruth. When a man threshes his grain he calls in the young men, who beat it out with flails. The women of the man's family winnow the grain. Often the man does not have enough women-folk to do all the work, and other women are called in to help. The helpers get all the grain that is left in the chaff as their portion. 476 462 241

Many women come to beg from the owner of the threshing floor. They do not speak to the owner of the floor, but they make a general statement that they have come to beg. They sit in silence, and watch the progress of the work. They do not ask for grain, but each woman keeps her gourd in a prominent position. When the threshing is finished, the owner of the field fills a basket with grain, and from that basket he 735 241

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slaughtered at the *Ngol*. This name is shouted when entering battle, though there are other war-cries associated with each age-set.

Among the Shilluk there are no elaborate and prolonged *rites de passage* through which the youths acquire manhood status and there are no separate ceremonies associated with their recruitment to an age-set. The final act of initiation is participation in a *Cong Bul*, or dance, and the preparations required to do so. The *Cong Bul* is purely a social dance which is arranged from time to time by permission of the *Jago* of the settlement and has no basic religious significance associated with change of status or with age-sets. It is not in itself a ceremony of initiation. To the young boy, then, to dance for the first time is merely a qualificatory rite by which he is recognised in his adult status—a symbol of reintegration to the community after a short period of segregation. Previous to his first dance, he is subject to certain restrictions. He may not fight with spears, nor take part in large-scale warfare or extra-tribal raids. He may not take part in any dances save in the moonlight festivities held by young people only. Further he is not allowed to wear certain kinds of clothing and ornaments, notably large necklaces of giraffe-hair, ostrich-egg beads, and cat skins and he may not adorn his hair with mud. A breach of conduct would be met with bitter ridicule, particularly by the girls, and no youth would dare to disregard the warning of his elders. All these restrictions and many more are removed at the time of the first *Cong Bul* attended by the initiate and indeed are noticably broken at the ceremony itself. The initiates wear the forbidden ornaments and carry spears.

Normally three or four boys from the same settlement are initiated together, but several of such batches may undergo the transitional rites in one year. Participation in his first *Cong* usually occurs when the boy is from fourteen to sixteen, but a youth may undergo the rites at an earlier age, if his father is dead and it is necessary to accelerate his change of status so that he can represent his family—especially if he has no elder brothers. When a youth has obtained his father's permission to undergo initiation, he acquires the necessary ostrich-egg beads and cat-skin and takes these to a man who is appointed his sponsor. The qualification for such a tutorial position is apparently popularity

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881 with girls. This man ceremonially ties on the youths dancing ornaments before he enters the dance and accompanies him to the dancing ground.

On the morning of the *Cong*, the candidate is taken with his companions to an *Ajwogo* or priest who performs certain rites with them before they continue on their way to the gathering. On their arrival at the village where the *Cong* is being held, the initiates form up two abreast and remain in the charge of their sponsor until the actual dancing begins. After this they enter the dance in the normal way, joining the ranks of the warriors who have certain acts of politeness to the *Jago* to perform before they are chosen as partners by the girls.

535 881 [534] The *Cong* takes place about four o'clock in the afternoon when the heat is less oppressive and the population of the district has finished work in the fields. The drum (often two, "*Bul Dwong*" and "*Bul Thin*") is placed on a wooden structure in the centre of the village. The drummer begins to call the local inhabitants together long before any dancing is due to take place and beats furiously on the drum at varying intervals. Women and those who are too old to dance assemble round the huts, gossiping and drinking merissa with the occupants. [554] The important men of the settlement, the *Jak* and their assistants and a few of the most respected elders assemble near to the hut of the *Jago* who offers them refreshment and tobacco. Meanwhile the warriors arrive in small batches, and stand outside the village. The normal [291] "*Lau*" of cloth is discarded and they put on skins fastened from their waists and ornament themselves with their special dancing beads and [411] sashes. They carry with them their best spears, but not the fighting shield, for the *Cong* has no military associations. Some have small [714] shields of hippo or crocodile skin make in miniature imitation of the heavy war shield, but the majority carry parrying-sticks or "stick-shields." Some wear strings of small bells wound crosswise round [301] their legs.

When the final touches have been put to their clothing, small groups of warriors enter the dancing ground in the centre of the village, shouting as they come. They shamble and jump round the drum and then disperse in small groups, while other warriors are assembling. When large groups have collected, after more salutations to the drum,

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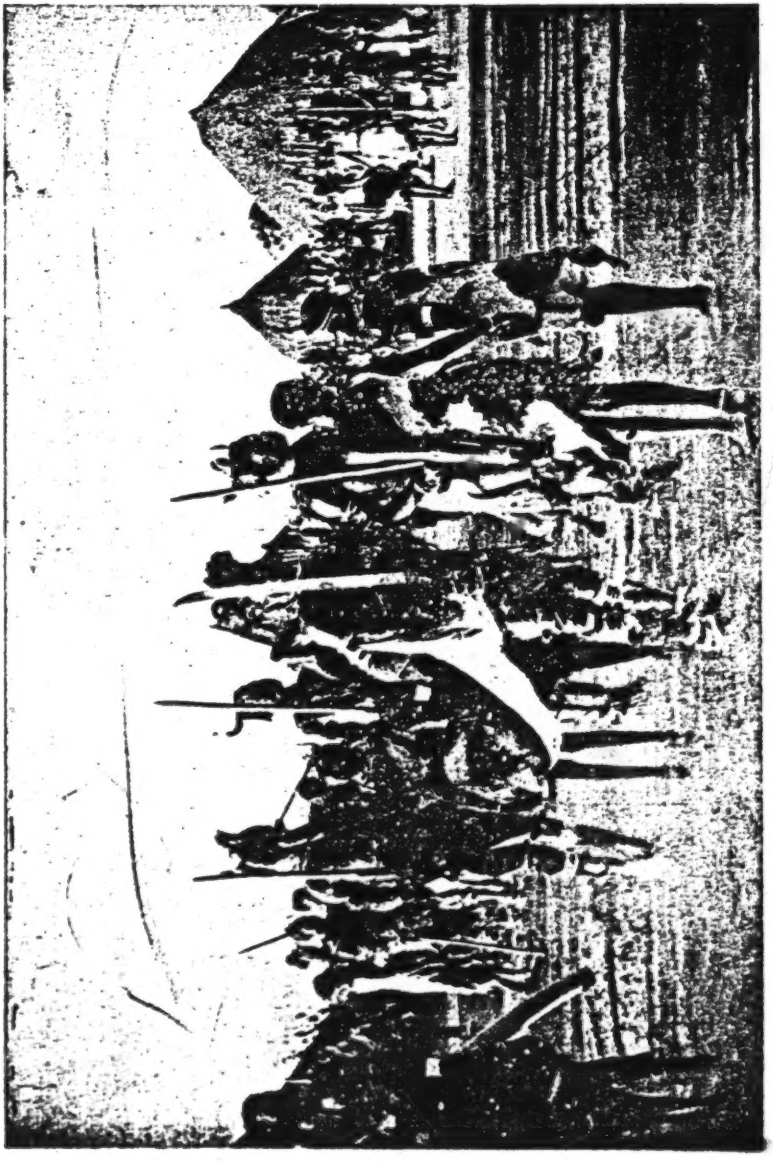

THE DANCE IN PROGRESS.

[p. 62 A]

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Warriors salute the Drum.

[p.62 B]

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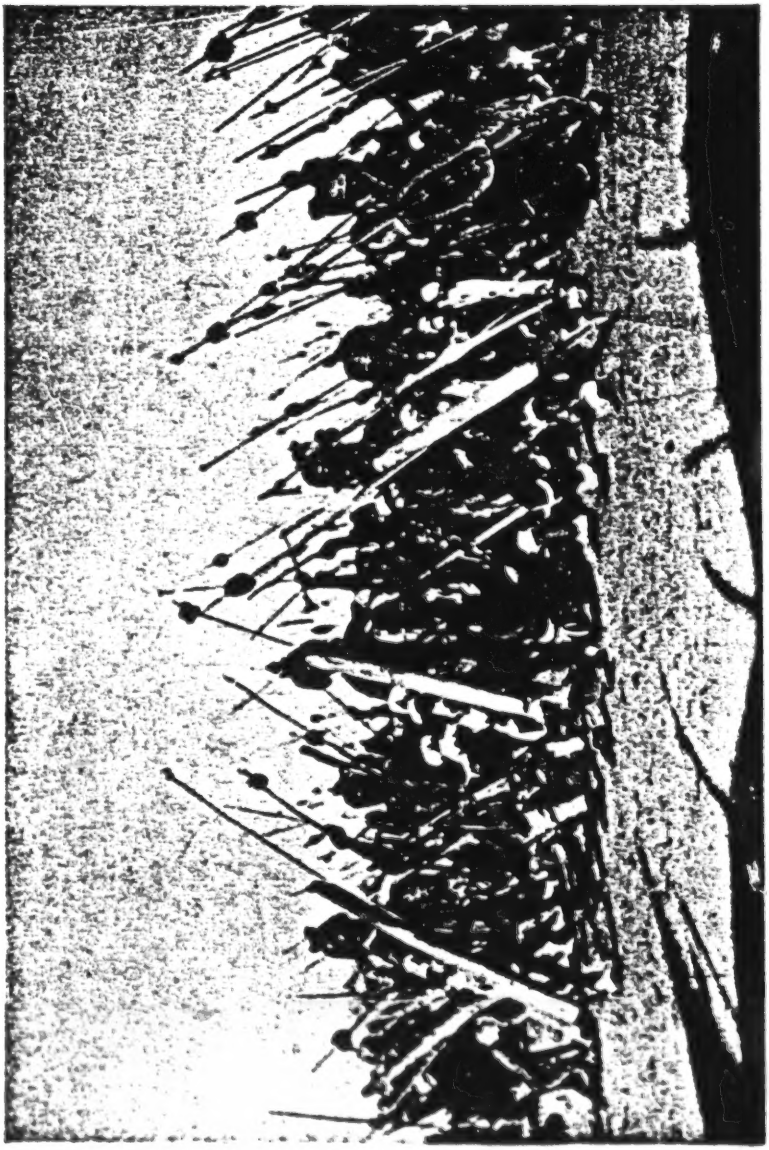

Warriors salute the Chief.

[p. 62 c]

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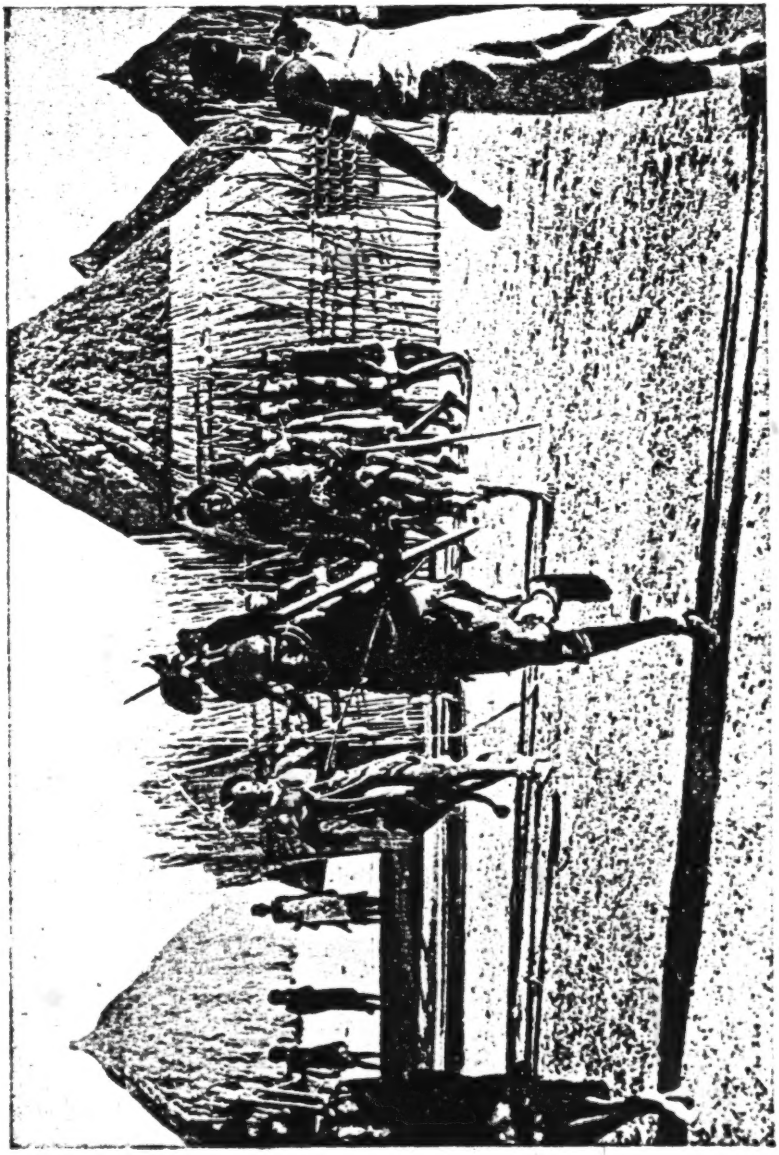

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they advance in formation towards the *Jago's* hut, quicker and quicker until in a wild rush they fling themselves as one body before the chief. When all the warriors have saluted the *Jago*, they retire for further rearrangement of their dress and this time they put away their spears. Armed with sticks and small shields only, they form a circle, two abreast round the drum. The girls now appear on the dancing-ground, and in two's or three's wander round the circle of waiting men, choosing their partners by a point of the hand or a discreet nod of the head. The choice of a partner is entirely the prerogative of the girl and the man has no say in the matter. He cannot refuse. It is a point of honour to the initiate that he should be chosen by some girl, for to dance with a girl is part of the ceremony and if ignored he would be the subject of many sarcastic witticisms afterwards.

Warriors and their partners then arrange themselves in groups of eight or ten, the men two abreast facing the girls who always dance backwards. In the actual dance, these groups advance anti-clockwise, hopping on both legs in time to rhythm. The head is held erect, the men with their arms flexed, holding in one hand a dancing stick, while the girls dance with their hands at their sides. There is no variation of this formation, other than an occasional raising of the hands above the head by the group as a whole.

While the dance is proceeding, the audience is entertained further by various individuals who greatly to their own enjoyment imitate animals or individuals of neighbouring tribes. The Shilluk are born mimers and every conceivable trick is devised. Thus at one *Cong*, the on-lookers were amused to see the arrival of a wild and unruly bull accompanied by two exasperated herdsmen who eventually succeeded in lassoing it, after it had charged and scattered the crowd. In another corner a hyena was craftily dragging away an old mat representing the corpse of a goat. Current events are also acted and although the side-shows have no connection with the *Cong Bul* itself, they are very popular with the guests and those who are clever at miming enjoy great prestige.

The *Cong Bul* lasts for about two hours. Shortly before sunset the drum ceases to beat in rhythm and the exhausted dancers hastily

535 881 leave the dancing ground. Within a few minutes the village is clear of all guests, those who are unable to stand being swept along in the rush.

881 431 Before dancing for the first time the initiate is usually presented with two spears by his father. The sons of rich men are presented with a bull (*Walh Owono*) as well.[8] This bull is treated with great care [553] and affection by the young warrior and he is given a new name by his age-mates—taken from the colour of the bull and they alone may call him so. Theoretically the bull is kept throughout his life, a new [583] one of similar colour and markings being substituted when it dies. It is never given as bride-wealth. The initiates then visit their relatives 881 in the settlement and after a short period of travel return home. In 574 the past these visits were probably on a wider scale and according to Hofmayer "after the dance it is the custom for the Shilluk initiates [114 171] to lead a nomadic life for a time, traversing the country from one end to the other." This statement is probably an exaggeration, but a period of wandering visits is common among African peoples before final reintegration into the community in adult status.

535 764 881 561 At the *Cong Bul*, initiates are introduced to their new privileges together, but the rest of the warriors are not drawn up in age-sets. At the "*Kwogo*" and "*Yok*," which are funeral ceremonies, the male Shilluk are organized according to their respective age-sets. There are few other occasions when the age-set system functions at all.

476 561 Among the Shilluk the more arduous processes of cultivation are carried out communally. A man will invite his neighbours and relatives to help him in his fields and will provide merissa for them afterwards. The helpers are not necessarily his age-mates and it does not appear

[178] 8. The Shilluk say that the custom is dying out and that few fathers have bulls to spare. In any case the youth will take the name of one of his father's bulls. The *Walh Owono* is a source of great pride to its owner and songs are composed about it which are sung for the benefit of girls.

An approximate translation of the song of Ajak, an inhabitant of the Zeraf mouth is as follows:

"I have a grey bull, a great bull,
I am going to Golbaign to buy a bell,
A bell for the bull–that lives in
My fathers byre."

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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drums began to beat, and the dancers, after dancing round the drums, moved off to salute the tomb of the late *reth*, singing the chant of Nyikang. They then broke up into smaller parties, each led by one or more of the important chiefs present, who brandished their swords in the air in front of them. The sons of the late *reth* did not take part in the dancing, but his wives and female relatives were much in evidence, dancing in front of and around the tomb and round the village, carrying the late *reth's* spears. Each party in turn visited the five huts of the late *reth*, the ordinary dancers singing outside and the chiefs dancing up to the entrances. During this ceremony and on subsequent days, old men and women would often execute *pas seuls*, the women with swords or performing the symbol of mourning by casting dust into the air. Some men imitated lions, and old people danced round the byres where the cattle of the late *reth* had been stabled.

After half an hour of dancing the drums stopped, and everyone sat down, but they began again after a short interval and the crowds took up the chant of *reth* Yor. The songs of the other *reths* were also sung, of Fafiti (two in number), of Yor, Kur Nyidhok and Kwathker, and occasionally the chant of Nyikang. Shortly before sundown, the drums were drawn and carried outside the village. The *reth* left for Fashoda and the dancers dispersed to their homes.

The Public Dance

Early the next morning, crowds began to collect in the village, and women, mostly *bangreth*, danced round the village singing and moving up to the houses of the late *reth* each in turn. No drum was beaten, the women advancing and retreating with a limping stride – one long pace, one short, with the emphasis and weight on the former. Individual women were also dancing around with sticks or with the swords of their husbands.

The new *reth* arrived at 10.30 a.m. and went straight to his house without appearing in public. Shortly after his arrival the warrior

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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766 contingents of Fashoda began to come in and marched around the outskirts of the village. The various performances carried out by each group did not vary to any appreciable extent except perhaps in the order. The main events recorded were :-

[411 703] The warriors, (Note 6) with shields, spears and sticks, entered the arena regimented with remarkable discipline into their sections. They first marched round the outside of the village, sometimes kneeling down as a body and beating their shields with their spears. They then moved in procession round the drums, turned to face them and [535] danced with a jumping motion in a circle round them, with their spears raised. They then turned to the tomb of the late *reth* and, mingling with the women who were standing outside and singing the songs of [644] Fafiti, knelt in homage towards him, sometimes beating their shields and clapping hands in time to the drums. The word *wuo*, the traditional form of opening a conversation with the *reth*, was repeated by all at certain points in the song. They then arose and advanced round the village, once more visiting the houses of the late *reth* in turn, some of them peering inside the doors as if seeking for him. They then marched outside the village, and another contingent of warriors entered to take their turn.

766 781 Twice during the day, there was a spontaneous panic, and the crowds fled shrieking from the village. The explanation given was that the spirit of the late *reth* had been brought back by Nyikang and was now in their midst Hands were clapped to drive the spirit away. The attitude of the Shilluk to this supposed phenomenon is important. There is no doubt that they were seized with fear, and fled as if the devil were behind them, but it was also regarded as a joke, and they all laughed heartily immediately afterwards. This mixture of fear and laughter is also characteristic of their flight from the effigy of Dak, which is described later. The panic was not started by any particular signal except that on both occasions someone heard somebody say "Nyikang has appeared."

The ceremonial dancing performed by the warriors and others, and the panic at the arrival of the departed spirit were repeated without

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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As Nyikang proceeds with Dak he sees beside him, the escort chants
643 778 [533] the songs of Nyikang and Dak recounting their exploits of conquest. From time to time Nyikang turns round and dances back as if to threaten those following. When he does this, Dak rushes ahead, carried in a charging position, his body held horizontally pointed like a spear, and Nyikang himself is carried 'at the slope'. The place where Nyikang spends the night is unpredictable. He does not move much after sunset, and normally spends the night in a shrine.

[417] Nyikang was observed at rest at Moro, the northern limit of his progress, obviously propped up upon his "bed", a long forked stick with a leather flap hanging from the fork. He was inside the fence of the large shrine, and outside under three large *heglig* trees, sacred to Nyikang, the people of Moro and the Kwanyikwom were dancing in his honour.

[535] The dancing at Moro was of a usual type. The dancers dancing in an anti-clockwise direction around the drums of Nyikang. The [533] burden of most of the songs was the conquest of the "Funy" and their ejection from Shilluk country. It was thought that Nyikang would stay two nights at Moro, but he was late and in a hurry. He left that same afternoon and returned to Akurwa on the 28th. On the 29th he started for Fashoda.

Nyikang was next observed at Golbainy south of Kodok on the 6th March. (He is said to have stayed in the following places—1.3.44 Nun, 2.3.44 Adod Thuro, 3.3.44 Athodwoi, 4.3.44 Detwok (Pabiu), 5.3.44 Kodok (Ninmal).) When Nyikang spends the night at a village, [574] the houses must be vacated by the villagers for the Kwanyikwom, who have also a right to be fed.

On the 6th March Nyikang arrived before midday at the village of *reth* Fafiti in Golbainy, where he spent the heat of the day. We arrived shortly after Nyikang and observed that he had been put into one of *reth* Fafiti's houses (not the tomb). There were dances around
533 the big *heglig* tree in the village similar to the dances at Moro. A large
535 contingent of female *bangreth* were the most obvious element led by
643 the senior *bareth*. The little drums of Nyikang were beaten under

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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the tree, and the boys and young men danced round with millet stalks, while the women clustered in the middle round the drums. The usual songs of Nyikang and of the various *reths* were sung, and we observed the *pas seuls* by *bangreth* with or without swords, often in little groups of five or six old women. There was no dancing inside the fence surrounding the tomb, and the crowd was noticeably small, consisting only of Kwanyikwom and a few surrounding villagers. At 3.30 p.m. there was no activity in the village, and we thought Nyikang must have gone. However, when an old woman who was sitting in the shade of a house was asked, she said "of course he is still here; are you fool enough to suppose our king would travel in this heat?" Shortly before 4.00 p.m. the Kwanyikwom began to collect, and a contingent of Ororo from Yoiny were drawn up near by. At 4.00 p.m. a bugler stood up from where he had been sitting in the shade of a byre and blew a call. Some moments later two drummers, each carrying one of the drums of Nyikang, appeared from the house where Nyikang was and beat a tattoo. Then another call on the bugle and the Kwanyikwom, kneeling down, started singing the songs of Nyikang. Later they got up and, joined by the Ororo and the children of the village, danced a solemn measure before the house where Nyikang was staying. Grown men of the Kwanyikwom danced out in front before the door with swords or millet stalks, and we noticed one man with an Ingessana throwing-knife. Soon men brought out from inside the fence some bundles of tightly packed grass, and some ropes made of *dom* fibre. They hung the ropes upon the fence and laid the grass bundles against it on the side of the opening opposite to where the drummers were standing. Shortly afterwards two men carrying baskets of food upon their heads appeared, and two others wound the ropes over their shoulders and round their waists. By this time there was considerable movement inside the fence. The two spears of Nyikang were raised up, and the forked stick upon which Nyikang sleeps. Then Dak appeared and behind him Nyikang himself. The two images posed for a moment or two while the company danced before them. Dak led off the procession at the usual jog trot, and they proceeded round the village to the beat of the drums, stopping at each

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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535 of *reth* Fafiti's houses, searching for him in the way the dancers had 643 done at the funeral dance. They stopped before each house while 778 the dancers danced up to them. They spent rather longer in front of the tomb of Fafiti, and then suddenly moved off on their way with all their following.

643 They passed the village of the new *reth*, paying no attention to 778 it, and went direct to the village of the chief of Golbainy (and all Gol Dhiang). Some 150 yards north of the village the images stopped, [533] and the company prayed to them and sang. They approached the [535] village from the side away from the road, but, instead of dancing straight in, they stopped on the threshold, and the people of the village, led by the chief, danced up to them as if to ward them off, and then quickly retired. The chief was called up, and then went off to his house. He brought a small grass mat (one foot square used for cover- [415 ing pots as a protection from flies), a small piece of rope,[14] and put 285] them on the ground. Dak and Nyikang stepped over the mat and rope and entered the village. A short dance round the village followed of the usual pattern, with Nyikang and Dak taking part. After a little Nyikang and Dak took up a position before the house which had been prepared for them in case they should wish to spend the night. The congregation sat down before them and sang songs. The women sat with heads averted from Nyikang. The refrain of the most popular [533 song was :— 539]

"Let the Dervish wreak his will,
Nyikang's land will prosper still."

643 The chief was called once more and had a secret talk with Dak. It is the tradition that Nyikang presents the chief of Golbainy on every installation with a spear, because originally Nyikang invested his [755 forebear with a spear of office. The alleged original spear is still used to cure disease. A piece of goat's ear is cut off with the spear and tied on the patient's ankle. The chief first provided a cattle

14. This may have been a pledge for the gift of sheep or a bull, or instead of a sheep for Nyikang to step over on entering the village.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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rope, a pledge of a bull for Nyikang and his people, and then produced an old blackened spear from his house, of unusual type among the Shilluk. After a show of reluctance he accepted a new spear. He later explained that the show of reluctance was due to the fact that the new spear was not an exact replica of the original. We were shown several spears which had been presented at previous installations, and then one was brought out which was the "original." But an old woman sitting by said "Nonsense, that is the one Nyikang presented when *reth* Yor was installed."

After the spear had been presented, the procession moved off to Nyigir. As before, on leaving Golbainy the people of Golbainy left the procession and their places were taken by the people of Nyigir, who grew in number as Nyikang reached the village of Adodo in Nyigir, where he was to stay till the installation

Nyikang, led by Dak, approached Adodo from the back and drew up outside the village while their following sang songs. Then a sheep was brought and tied in the middle of the village by the legs. Nyikang and Dak stepped over it, and Nyikang danced over to the house prepared for him and went in. Dak stayed outside for some time, dancing around, faster and faster, charging people who got in his way, until finally he too disappeared into the house.

THE RETH'S FLIGHT TO DEBALO

(P.P.H.)

The march of Nyikang from Akurwa to Nyigir was ended. He and Dak surrounded by the Kwanyikwom and other followers were safely installed in the village of Adodo. They would take their rest there for three days.

Meanwhile the *reth* had anxiously awaited their arrival but had not moved from the confines of Fashoda. In the early hours of the morning after Nyikang had reached Adodo, the *reth* secretly moved to Debalo which is a few miles south of the capital. He was accompanied

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 644 with news of Nyikang's refusal, but is again sent to fetch her, this time accompanied by the chief of the Gol Nyikang. On their repeating the *reth's* demand Nyikang falls into a fury of rage and cries out that he will punish this presumptuous young upstart, who lays such outrageous demands on his property. Immediately he calls for his drummers, who beat out a tattoo summoning his warriors to war. The two envoys of the *reth* return to warn him of Nyikang's anger, and once more the two armies prepare for battle.

643 541 This is the traditional explanation of the cause of the second battle, and the tradition was faithfully enacted. Early that morning Jago Ajang of the Kwa Okel was summoned to Aturwic and was seen later searching for *nyakwer*. After talking with the Kwa Nyikwom outside the shrine he went back to Aturwic and returned accompanied by Jago Yor Leiker, the chief of Gol Nyikang. Together they entered the shrine, but hurried out almost immediately, and the drums of Nyikang began to beat. The Kwa Nyikwom and other followers of Nyikang, both male and female, clustered round the shrine, and the drummers continued to beat the drums either seated inside the withy fence, which surrounds the shrine, or walking round the whole building. An ox-hide was laid in the open space between the shrines and the temporary huts, and the drums placed thereon. [533 535] Nyikang's followers began to dance and sing, the words of the song indicating that Nyikang was angered, and that the *reth* should appease him. The dance continued for some time, the dancers working themselves into a frenzy of excitement, leaping high into the air with arms stretched above them. Suddenly Nyikang and Dak appeared at the entrance of the shrine, and the army began to collect round them. Led by Dak they encircled the shrine three times, and then marched off to the hut known as *gol onger*, where the ropes of Dak and the whips are kept. The Kwa Nyikwom armed themselves with these and moved forward towards the mound, with Dak and Nyikang at [778] their head. At this point another effigy appeared, a smaller one with grey (female) ostrich-feathers for the head and a slim body of twined rope. This was Cal another son of Nyikang. (Note 20).

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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643 on their heads. I recognised them as Kwa Nyikwom going back to Akurwa. Their return had been hastened by the early rain.

778 643 535 Fashoda had the party spirit, particularly the *reth*. He at once led me to the centre of Fashoda and I sat down in the shade of a cattle byre to be inconspicuous, for something was about to happen. Nyikang, Dak and Cal were all packed up and ready to go to Akurwa. They were in fact all three standing outside Aturwic. Everyone was dancing and singing.

The *reth* went up the mound and spoke to the people carrying Nyikang. Suddenly Dak and Cal followed by Nyikang came down from the mound and made a bee-line for me.

They rushed to where I was sitting and started dancing at me two paces away. The *reth* was dancing with them. They continued dancing till I gave them the token small piece of grass, which represented a bull, which I would give them at Kodok. They then went on, and did the same to any of the chiefs they found at Fashoda. The chief of Lul knew the honour would cost him a bull, and so he stayed discreetly in his house.

When Nyikang had thus gathered what he wanted for the journey home, they all danced round and round for an hour or more with the *reth* beside them. Then they became more solemn and as a final gesture they stood the *reth* under the folds of Nyikang's wrappings and sang the songs of Nyikang. The casting of the mantle of [177] Nyikang over the new *reth* was to bring him back luck. Nyikang, Dak, 643 778 the *reth* and the *reth's jal tyel kwom*, his chamberlain, were in the middle of the small throng. The Ororo woman, who had enticed him away from *nyakwer* at the time of the installation, and some of the *reth's* sisters, were sitting around in front. I was about 10 paces away. [187] [193] A small girl by my side swooned, and was possessed by Nyikang—when she grew up, she would have charge of one of his shrines.

Then at last the party formed up and dashed off at a trot, on their way. The *reth* escorted them about 200 yards, and then came back. "Come and have a bowl of beer," he said "because it is hot."

Just before dawn they set up the four royal drums on end in holes specially dug in the ground[2] and in the centre of the village opposite the *kengo*. They were beaten for a short while as a signal that the public ceremonies of mourning would begin that day. In addition a fire was lit using fire sticks (*pic mac*), an important ritual item in any Shilluk ceremony, and a sheep was sacrificed.

I reached Kujo that afternoon just in time to see the *kwa* Nyikir enter the village again, singing as they came and carrying the spear of Nyikang wrapped in white cloth and also a basket which I was told contained certain sacred relics including the bell or Nyikang (*orok Nyikang*). The party stepped over a sheep held to the ground in front of them[1] and then took up their position round the drums.

Meanwhile an ox had been tethered near to the drums and a Shilluk warrior stood by, spear in hand. At a given signal he plunged his spear into the ox, missing the heart, and causing only a slight wound in the haunch, with the result that it broke away and had to be despatched outside the village. No particular attention was paid to this unfortunate incident which might have been regarded as an ill omen, and immediately the drums began to beat, the *kwa* Nyikir skipping round them four times and again stepping on to and over a sheep tethered to the ground. The main body of spectators consisting of important persons and the occupants of Kujo and neighbouring villages then entered the arena. These people carrying millet stalks, sticks and swords, but no spears, danced round the drums in an anti-clockwise direction singing the song of Nyikang followed by that of *reth* Dak Nyikang and finally a new song composed in honour of the deceased. After several minutes of dancing in this manner, the crowd moved forward and knelt facing the shrine clapping their hands as a sign of grief. These royal mourning songs reflect the Shilluks' attitude towards their kings. *Agwet wad Nyidhongo piny apath cie Yor wad Nyidhongo labo arieny*, "Agwet wad Nyidhongo, the earth is

[2] These holes are specially dug beforehand and bells and other sacred objects put beneath the drums. For normal social events Shilluk drums are laid horizontally or lean against supports set in the ground.

[1] The significance of this act is not clear and Shilluk merely say that it must be done; it is "according to custom," *kwong*. I have, however, frequently heard it said that the act, *akadh*, is intended to remove impurities which might be harmful to the *reth*. The procedure is followed in all sorts of ritual situations in which the *reth* is concerned. It will be remembered that the *reth* steps over a bull-calf when he leaves Debalo and over a black bull at Arepejur on his way to Fashoda on the first day of the installation ceremonies. It will also be remembered that in the old days, prior to *reth* Fadiet, a man (and a girl) was subjected to the same treatment as the bulls and sheep, and, though it is not true that he invariably died in the process, he was never allowed to come into direct contact with the *reth*. See Howell and Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 54 and p. 79, Note 21.

22: Howell E-5 (1951) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

remains of the *reth* had been buried, the *kwa* Nyikir took the field in front of four upturned drums. These drums were either those of the village of Debwor or had been borrowed from nearby villages. The anti-clockwise procession of the *kwa* Nyikir then began, each of them hopping over a gourd (*keny*) which was produced as a substitute for a sheep which is normally used on these occasions. The drummers, led by *jago* Bol, their chief, then took up their position round the drums and began to beat them. At Debwor there was no ritual lighting of fire (*pic*) by fire sticks as at Kujo and which had preceded all ceremonies relating to the election of the *reth* and the burial of the old one; possibly the spirit of the late *reth* had left the place. As the drums began to beat, the chiefs of Gerr—with the exception of the chief of Muomo who was in charge of the arrangements for the installation then being made at the shrine at Akurwa and had not come—began to dance with the shuffling gait of a religious dance (*yieko* as opposed to social dances, *cong tugo*) and finally all went up to the hut in which the late *reth's* body had lain for so many months and sang songs to Nyikang outside it just as the chiefs of Luak had done outside the burial hut at Kujo and an ox (*nyijuk*) was speared as a sacrifice. The purport of this song was "we have asked for cows but instead you have beaten us; please restore to us our cows this time." This presumably meant that they were asking for better treatment under the new *reth*, for Dak *wad* Fadiet, "the scourge of Nyikango," had been a most unpopular figure outside his own area.

With this, the important ceremonies were over and the march of the clans followed. The sections which participated were Both, Bol, Nyingaro, Pabur, Agodo, Biu, Thwolong, Yony, Lul, Fashoda, Nyigir, Golbany, Fadheiang, and Lemo. This took two days. Kodok and Golo did not come, possibly because they were too much in favour of the house of Fafiti and had never supported Dak. Thus the pattern of this ceremony in Gerr followed closely that which had been performed in Luak at Kujo, only there was no body to bury. The predatory *ororo* had little to do except the unpleasant one of taking up the bier and skins on which the *reth's* remains had previously lain and rotted and burying them inside the hut and of guarding the sacred mound outside the hut. I had thought that this hut, where the body of the late *reth* had been immured, would be broken down when the remains had been brought out to carry to Kujo, but this was not so, and the *ororo* had the ghoulish task of breaking down the door and collecting the remains into a presentable bundle while the house was still standing. The hut was still in good condition and will not be broken down until later, when the *bangreth* Dak will level the hut to ground, though they will continue to occupy the rest of the village as formerly."

22: Howell E-5 (1951) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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PLATE 16. The *kwa* Nyikir entered the village of Kujo, after stepping over a sheep held to the ground.

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415
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PLATE 17. They entered the village, singing and dancing, with the spear of Nyikang wrapped in white cloth, and the basket containing sacred relics.

[P. 164 (A)]

27: Munro U-5 (1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

and also the official residence of the Ret [1]. About 11 a.m. loud drumming in the distance gave us the first intimation that Nyakang was en route from its shrine in Nyagir and was now approaching Fashoda. In the distance on the slight slope north of Fashoda a large company could be seen with Nyakang and Dak [2] borne aloft in the centre. Hundreds of Shilluk warriors were in attendance on Nyakang and its people. The men of Golbaing and Nyagir were acting as flank guards, and the whole array with the sun on its spears was most impressive. Once and again according to correct tradition Nyakang turned back and retraced its way to very near its starting point in Nyagir. This I understood to be indicative of Nyakang's uncertainty as to whether it would accept the new Ret and bestow on him its divine protection. The pauses and returns of the concourse became more frequent, but shorter in time and during them the warriors and maidens could be seen dancing. About this time a small band of four warriors sent by Fafiti appeared in Fashoda and proceeded to circle round it two or three times with the peculiar dancing stride of the Shilluks. This band was shortly increased to six in number, and finally took its stand on Nyakang's road. The blowing of a horn announced the appearance of the Ret's army from Akwom, a great crowd of warriors. They came on apace until near the small khor about a quarter of a mile south of Fashoda — they were chiefly from the Southern sections, although Kodok itself immediately surrounded the Ret. It was impossible to see Fafiti himself as yet owing to the crowd.

The small party of six above mentioned now plays its part as a post between the Ret and Nyakang. The messengers all ran at full speed and appeared to be changed at the half way post. They are taking offers from the Ret to Nyakang. At first Nyakang refuses them, and turns back. Eventually

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[1] His house consists of four fine built huts enclosed in a fence. The western hut is known as Du-Kot', and in it are kept the sacred stool, the spear, the sword and the shield. The Eastern hut is for the Ret's wives, and the other two are used for any thing the Ret likes. The stool etc. are brought out for the ceremony and redeposited in Du-Kot' afterwards.

[2] Dak is the son of Nyakang: his effigy is much taller and thinner in body, but smaller in head than that of Nyakang. Both effigies are in charge of Ador son of Akol Adong of Akurwa.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

312 Aguno I stopped to watch a couple of men stretching and
[281] scraping a cow hide. One of them called to a girl in the village, his wife or sister, to bring him some water to soften the skin. With great reluctance she brought a large bowlful and stood by, while with lavish hand the man splashed the precious water on skin and ground indiscriminately. He then demanded more and I thought, and hoped, that she would refuse; that she would remind him that she had walked eleven burning miles to bring the water that he threw away so thoughtlessly. After a moment's hesitation, however, she picked up the bowl he had thrown at her feet and turned slowly towards the hut, but as she did so I saw two tears overflow from her brimming eyes and roll down her cheeks. Such
[562] drudgery is forced on these womenfolk by circumstance and custom, and we can only wish that things were in some way bettered.

361 But now let us proceed and see what a Shilluk village is
[487] like. We enter it along a little path which leads from the main road and passes through the dried up, yellow stubble of last season's millet plantation.

Passing through the space between the fences of two
[367] neighbouring homesteads, we come upon a large level
[535] circle of bare ground which is the playground of the village and its dancing floor. Sometimes it boasts a tree, green and leafy in contrast to its dun, dusty surroundings, under the refreshing shade of which the village elders gather to discuss
[521] the affairs of their little world: the price of cattle, the failure of the harvest, the prospect of the fishing. Under the tree, too,
[534] or at the further side of the dancing floor, are two large forked stakes driven into the ground to hold the drums. Around this circular central space the family dwellings are grouped.

[621] Villages vary in size, from the small hamlet consisting of two or three homesteads to a large settlement of sixty or seventy. An average-sized village contains about thirty families. All, however, are set up on the same plan, and the houses are built according to the same pattern. Each house-
351 hold consists of two houses set facing one another in a small

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512 pounding and grinding the flour in preparation for the evening meal. Some of them will go off to the neighbouring [439] forest to collect firewood to sell to the mission, or they will gather some of the small eggs their undersized hens produce and take them to the Sisters to sell or exchange for a little oil or salt or cloth.

So the day passes: the village drowses under the fierce heat of midday and afternoon, but comes to life again as evening approaches. The men return from the river bringing the results of their day's labour, a few stout cow ropes, a new doormat, or a string of fish to supplement the supplies for the evening meal. The cattle stream in again and are tied up and milked by the boys, the dried cow dung is collected into heaps and set on fire and soon a cloud of thick, acrid smoke drifts low over the village. Fires begin to twinkle through the gathering dusk as preparations are made in the various [262] compounds for the cooking of supper—boiled millet flour again with perhaps the addition of a little fish. The moon is nearly full and by the time supper is finished is sailing high in the heavens, lighting up the village with silvery brilliance.

512 It is the invitation to the dance. A huge fire is lighted in the 535 middle of the dancing floor, the drums are brought out and —on with the dance. Food is plentiful at present and the fishing has been good of late, so they dance because they are happy. Or perhaps food is scarce and there is no fish to be had, and supper has been meagre, or even non-existent. They dance just the same to try to forget their emptiness and misery. Any excuse will suffice, or no excuse at all. The tom-toms begin to throb, boy faces girl, and the dance begins. The booming of the drums and the yelling of the dancers, assisted by a gentleman who winds the same three [533] notes on a kudu horn with maddening persistency, defeat all attempts at sleep in the mission half a mile away. We thump our wet pillows and call down blessings on the merrymakers. The revels continue far into the night, but at last, about midnight, even the Shilluk have had enough and, exhausted, crawl into their huts to sleep. Silence falls on the place, but it is shortly broken by the mournful howl of a prowling hyena.

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the roar of voices and the clashing of weapons might well make him apprehensive that he would soon find himself on the scene of a bloody battle between two rival villages. However, the reality would prove such fears unfounded, for he would merely discover that the dance was on, and that Shilluk youth was taking an afternoon off to enjoy itself. The Shilluk is fonder of dancing, we may suppose, than of anything else in the world. He will walk, or rather run and leap and jump, for miles to a place where dancing is to take place; and as he goes along he will lift his unmusical voice in raucous song, or give vent to blood-curdling whoops, springing high into the air and lunging with his spear at imaginary foes. Then for the next two or three hours he will bruise his great flat feet by pounding them on the ground, and yell himself hoarse, yet return home at the end of it not a bit less exuberant than when he set off. It may be the rainy season when the food stores are at their lowest level, and he will return home to a damp, fireless hut and an empty food bowl, but he does not mind; if he cannot eat and drink, at least he can make merry, and the dance will continue tomorrow and the day after too.

The day of his first dance marks a high light in the life of a Shilluk boy. Up to this he has been a wistful onlooker, a mere boy among other boys, whose occupation has been the minding of sheep and goats, the cleaning out of the cattle byre, the fetching and carrying for his betters; now, however, he has become as good as they are. He may dye his cloth as red and do up his hair as elaborately as they; carry real spears, not just some blunted cast-off a good-natured elder brother has given him; sit in council among his equals; take up his good new spear, if necessary, in defence of his village or his tribe.

On the day of the dance therefore, he attires himself with great care; his body shines with oil and is liberally powdered with red ochre; his hair is dressed in the way beloved of Shilluk youth; since 'tails' are *de rigueur* for these functions, he wears them: an antelope skin bound round his waist by a coloured sash with two strips of skin from the legs hanging

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down at the back; round his neck, instead of a white tie, he wears a collar of discs cut from the shell of an ostrich egg and a necklet of hair from the tail of a giraffe; his face is painted in some tasteful design in red, white and blue; his arms are loaded with all the beads he possesses or can beg, borrow or steal, and if he can fasten a large clanging bell to one elbow, he is extra pleased; his legs are cross-gartered with strings of metal shells, the size and shape of mussel shells, which give a most satisfying clashing sound when he moves; in his right hand he carries the three-foot long dancing stick of brown wood adorned at the top with two lugs of leather, in his left he grasps his dancing shield, a short, thick cylinder of ambach wood. Thus accoutred, he takes his beautiful new spear in the hand which holds the dancing stick, and with great pride sets out, surrounded by a bevy of admiring females, to join a number of his fellow dancers. Some of these are neophytes like himself, others have long since tasted the sweetness of the initiation dance, but all are picturesquely garbed and bedecked in the same way. In single file they proceed, running and yelling, leaping and whooping, towards the distant village where the drums are already beginning to throb and to which noisy throngs are converging from all sides. The girls follow on, no less excited than their brothers and sweethearts, and as they run along they give vent to their feelings in shrill ululations. They are more soberly dressed than the gorgeous males: an animal skin or a dark blue cloth is fastened on one shoulder and falls to the knees; they have anointed themselves with oil, put on their best beads, and perhaps smeared a little red dust on the top of their heads and touched up their faces with a little paint. Yet they need not worry that lack of charm or beauty will mean a lack of partners; if there are to be any wallflowers at the dance, they will be among the men, for every girl will have her beau. Nor need they have any misgivings about not knowing the correct steps; a leap upwards and backwards in time with the beat of the drums and a half turn to right and left with every dozen steps is all that is required. It is not grace of move-

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ment so much as endurance that is called for at a Shilluk dance.

The festivities are opened by a salute of the warriors to the assembled chiefs. The leader of the band approaches carrying a bowl of dust and asks the senior chief present or the leading guest to bless the dance; he takes a little dust from the bowl and sprinkles it on the ground while calling down a blessing on the gathering. Then the warriors who are congregated at the opposite end of the field thunder forward with whoops and cries, their spears uplifted to strike, the lust of killing in their eyes; they stop dead in their tracks when the spears of the front rank are but a foot away from the row of chiefs and guests, and a roar of laughter goes up if they succeed in making anyone flinch. A second wave follows the first and so on, until with the onslaught of the last group this phase of the dance ends. The beat of the drums now quickens its tempo, spears are discarded in favour of dancing sticks and ambach shields, and the girls come forward to claim partners. A girl may take part in the dance almost at any age, so that little girls of not more than twelve years of age are found taking their places in the long lines being formed. The dancers arrange themselves two abreast, the boys facing the girls; the boys stand with arms bent and sticks held upright, the girls hold themselves rigid with their arms pressed close to their sides. As three hundred pairs of feet thud down in unison, the ground seems to shake and dust rises in clouds; the drums throb, feet thump, the metal shells clash and bells clang, male voices yell hoarsely and female trill—the din is indescribable. The long lines circle slowly round the dancing floor, the boys jumping forward and the girls backward; in a concerted movement the girls raise their arms as if to ward off a blow and make a turn, first to the left, then to the right, while their male partners make the same half turns, bringing their sticks and shields over the girls' heads to protect them, as it were, from the threatened attack. This movement which is done at every dozen or so steps is the only variation in the monotonous jumping of the dance. A rest is called when the drummers

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535 are exhausted, but it is not long before the drumming is
881 renewed with fresh vigour, for there is no lack of volunteers for the privilege of supplying the rhythm required, with a rapid slap of palm or thump of stick.

If our European traveller has halted to watch the dance and stayed as long as this, he will by now be deafened by the noise, choked by the dust and made dizzy by the monotonous movements of the dancers. He will be relieved when at last he is able to make his apologies to his host, ease up his cramped legs from the cowskin on which he has been sitting and make his escape. The din will follow him along the road, until in the distance it becomes a subdued murmur and finally dies away altogether. Behind him the dance continues with unabated enthusiasm, but when the sun begins to go down behind the trees, the party breaks up, and those who took part in it, still filled with the excitement which has possessed them all the afternoon, leap and shout and sing their way homeward. For them life is good. This is only the first day of the dance; there will be another tomorrow, and the day after that. Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow—we dance!

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The body of the dead king, wrapped in a white cloth, lies in state in his capital of Fashoda. During the course of the second night it is taken secretly to a nearby village for temporary interment, for by tradition the body is not to be buried for about a year after the death of the king, but is placed in a hut which is sealed up. Traditionally, too, the youngest of his wives should be sealed up alive with him, and the hut allowed to fall into ruins and thus form a tomb for them, but happily this dreadful custom is no longer practised.

After an interval of about a year, the remains of the dead king are removed from their temporary resting place and taken, again by night and with secrecy, to his own village where they are buried in a grave dug in the floor of a hut. This is a signal for the people from all over the country to come in for the funeral dances. The number of people who attend the dances is indicative of the popularity that the late king enjoyed among his subjects, and so too is the number of cattle sacrificed. This may run into several hundreds, some of which are contributed by the family of the deceased, but most being the tribute of chiefs and people. The meat of the slaughtered animals is distributed among those taking part in the funeral ceremonies.

Two or three days after the king has been buried, on a day appointed, the warriors armed with spears and war shields and in well-ordered companies, each headed by a flag bearer and marshalled according to the district from which they come, encircle the outside of the village, singing songs in praise of Nyikang and the late king. They then enter the village and dance round the drums and the tomb, stopping at a concerted signal to kneel in homage to the dead, facing the tomb, clashing spear on shield and addressing funeral chants to the king. Once more they encircle the village, this time on the inside, visiting each of the late king's huts in turn, some stepping out of the ranks and peering into the empty huts as though searching for the king and then retiring to give place to the next contingent. Thus the funeral ceremonies continue for two or three days, but

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766 535 at length the drums cease to throb, the last of the animals are sacrificed and the meat distributed to the dancers and the people disperse to their homes. The king is dead. . . .

643 666 642 669 The country has not, however, remained without a king all this time. The period of interregnum is one of disquiet, and there is always the real fear that one of the nyireth may make a bid for the throne. As soon as possible, then, after the king's death, within a few days in fact, the electorate council meets to choose the new king. This council is made up of eleven chiefs of the Colo, the descendants of the original companions of Nyikang, and three members of the royal houses.

175 631 When Nyikang first settled the country he divided it into eleven major districts, appointing a chief to each. These chiefs were all Colo since, as Nyikang was the first Reth, the Kwareth had not then come into being. These eleven chiefs form the board of electors, and with them sit three of the 614 Kwareth, one from each of the three royal houses, those of Papiti, Fadiet and Yor, whose sons are eligible for the kingship. Among these three families there may be as many as forty or fifty nyireth, entitled as such to consideration for the vacant throne. It is generally accepted, however, though not a hard and fast rule, that the three royal families should provide a king in rotation, and it is certainly understood that the family of the late king is automatically ruled out. Attention is therefore concentrated on the claims of the candidates from the other two houses, with the weight of opinion in favour of that one which has the more remotely provided a king. Many of the nyireth are eliminated at once on account of old age, extreme youth, physical debility, weakness of character, etc., and the merits and demerits of the rest are given serious consideration, until the number is reduced to half a dozen or less from among whom the final choice is made. How selection is finally made is the secret of the council. Sometimes the late king may have 'adopted' a certain nyireth, and thus indicated his wish in the matter of his successor. Such an indication does not mean that the king's protégé will certainly be chosen but it will have great

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weight in the deliberations of the electorate. Sometimes, too, when the final choice is a difficult one, it would seem that the selectors have recourse to augury and divination. A number of small stones, one for each candidate, is placed in a fierce fire. A stone that glows red indicates that, under the prince it represents, cattle will be plentiful in the country; a white-hot stone would presage an abundance of grain in the new rule; one glowing both white and red would entail an era of plenty both in cattle and grain, whilst that which merely blackens and bursts would unanimously be rejected.

When the decision is at last reached, one of the great chiefs goes unobtrusively and by night to the village where the king-elect is living. During the deliberations of the electorate all nyireths are required to remain in their own homes and not to approach the neighbourhood of Fashoda; this precaution is taken to ensure that no nyireth should rush the capital and usurp the power for himself. The chief challenges the nyireth to a mock battle and when he has thus given a token of his prowess and valour the news of his election is formally broken to him. He is brought quietly, again under cover of night, to Fashoda, and at daybreak inducted with ceremony into his capital. When these preliminaries are over and the reth-elect is settled in Fashoda, the news of his election is noised abroad, and chiefs and nyireths come in from all parts of the country to pay their respects to their new king. The situation has become somewhat easier now, since with the accomplished fact, there is little likelihood of an armed insurrection taking place. There is always of course the possibility of any nyireth asserting his right to the throne and proving it by slaying the king in single combat, and in former days it was customary for the king to slaughter as many of the nyireths as he could lay his hands on—a most effective method of reducing the potential danger to himself.

The period between the election and the solemn installation of the king is roughly a year. During this time the land is, as it were, dead, for the spirit of Nyikang still lacks its habitual abode, and is under interdict. No great public dances may be held, except the funeral dances for the late

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reth, no building may be done and the usual burning off of the grass in the early dry season is forbidden.

During this time also active preparations are on foot for the ceremonies of installation. Iron must be obtained and special ceremonial and presentation spears forged; silver, ivory and ostrich feathers procured for the making of bracelets and other ornaments; a hunting party has to make inroads (either without the knowledge or with the connivance of the government) upon a strictly protected species of antelope in order to obtain the highly prized skins which serve the purpose of purple and ermine in the installation ceremonies. The forging of the sacred spears is introduced with special ceremony; with appropriate sacrifice new fire by the immemorial method of the friction of hard wood upon soft is made and the implements of the blacksmiths blessed.

There is great activity during this period of preparation in Akurua in the north of the country, Nyikang's own sacred village. It was from here that the hero-king disappeared in a whirlwind from the sight of mortal man, and it is to Akurua that he returns in order that he may go to Fashoda to install his successor as reth. In the shrine at Akurua are housed the sacred effigies of Nyikang and his son, Dak, which are carried in procession from Akurua to Fashoda for the installation. These effigies consist of heads of ostrich feathers fixed in bamboo sockets, and are in fact fetishes, since the souls of Nyikang and Dak are believed to inhabit them. On the death of a king the old effigies are destroyed and new ones made for the installation of the reth-elect.

When preparations at Fashoda are completed, messengers are sent to Akurua to inform Nyikang that it is time to march to Fashoda. The effigies are then carried out, borne aloft by members of a clan whose special prerogative this is, and start on the journey to the capital, a distance of about seventy miles. The procession moves south at a smart pace. Dak's mop of feathers on the end of a long bamboo pole looks like an oversized feather duster; Nyikang's head of ostrich plumes is very much bigger than that of his son's,

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Sacrament he was receiving. He was not unmindful of my needs and sent word that food was to be prepared for me. I was taken into another house—a very special one into which few but the king and his queens enter. A woman brought me a skin to sit on and then, on her two knees, presented me with roasted maize cobs and native beer. I was in very great need of a drink for though we had waded through lots of water we could not drink it; if we did, dysentery was sure. This special house contained a very fine collection of animal skins and also the spear of Nyikang, a thing most sacred to the Shilluk. There also was a stick on which were recorded the years of the king's reign. I was sent a wing of a saddle-billed stork to use as a fan and these are, as a rule, reserved to the king himself.

At two in the afternoon I said good-bye to the king who made me a further present of a goat, and I set out for home. King Joseph, as he was now, had very thoughtfully ordered an ambach canoe to be brought so that I could cross a very deep swamp on a path that made our journey much shorter. I was feeling very tired, and every mile my feet felt like lumps of lead—the last mile seemed very long. But I arrived home about five o'clock and I announced in church the good news that the king was baptized and all the Catholics of the mission rejoiced. There were no hostile remarks from pagans that I ever heard of. King Joseph, formerly Papiti, died on September 22nd.

By King Papiti's express wish the customary temporary interment was not proceeded with, and on the night of the day following his death, he was taken to his own village of Pareth Papiti (Village of King Papiti) and there buried. The traditional funeral dances were held in his honour, but took place much earlier than usual, only about six weeks after his death.

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578 628 [737] [648] more severe than usual. The government set up a grain distribution centre at Pabiu, since it was the chief village of the district. Pabiu waxed fat and rejoiced; Detwok snarled in anger and groaned with hunger and metaphorically tightened its belt and longed for the day when it would triumph over its arrogant rival.

Two years later, in September 1945, things boiled up again, and I thought that bloodshed on a large scale was unavoidable. A dance was being held at Pabiu and, since for a long time peace had reigned between the two villages, the people from Detwok attended. I usually permitted the [535] schoolboys to go to these harmless afternoon dances, and was horrified when they came streaming back an hour before the usual time, crying that fighting had broken out and that men had been killed. There were boys from both Detwok and Pabiu attending the school and these, fearing that the mission would be raided during the night by one side or the other, refused to stay there and fled to the sanctuary of their homes and the protection of the spears of their fathers and brothers. Fortunately, things were not as bad as they appeared at first. People from all the surrounding villages [535] attend these frequent dances, and among those enjoying themselves on this happy afternoon were the people from Alel, a large village three miles south of Detwok. During the dance a man from Detwok came face to face with one from Alel who, it seemed, had in company with his friends waylaid the Detwokian some time previously and beaten him up. Excited by the dancing, the Detwok warrior, suddenly confronted by his enemy, could not restrain himself. His spear flashed and the other man fell wounded. Immediately there was uproar. Alel was by way of being allied to Pabiu, and the two villages promptly joined forces against Detwok. A scrimmage ensued during which blows were struck and a few spear wounds were inflicted, but only one man—from Detwok—was seriously wounded. In the face of superior numbers Detwok had to withdraw, followed by the taunts of the victors, but swearing revenge. Two days of tension followed during which the Sisters were kept busy

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tending the hurts of the wounded. It seemed that the affair had ended; the boys began to creep back to school and we breathed freely again. The next morning, however, there was a fresh alarm. One of our Christians ran breathlessly into the mission and begged me to send at once to Kodok for assistance and to go myself to Pabiu to stop what might develop into a battle royal. It appeared that Alel was to hold a dance that afternoon and Pabiu was going to attend in force. To do so they must necessarily pass Detwok, and the braves of that village swore that they would do so only over their dead bodies, and that if they attempted it, Detwok would strew the road with their corpses. To this Pabiu joyfully replied that it would enjoy the task of putting Detwok in its proper place, under the earth, once and for all.

I immediately sent a runner to Kodok and after lunch, for if I was going to suffer martyrdom I thought there was no sense in doing so on an empty tummy, I went forth to try and keep the Pax Britannica till what time others, more competent, could arrive to enforce it. I went first to Pabiu, and found the warriors happily preparing for the dance. Faces were being carefully painted, bodies oiled and smothered in red dust, dancing skins being donned and all the paraphernalia so dear to the Shilluk heart and so essential to the Shilluk dance ready at hand; bells, shells, bracelets, beads, strips of gaudy cloth—anything indeed that could provide a riot of sound and colour; but I saw too that spears were being carefully sharpened and polished, and the large war shields not usually carried on the occasion of an ordinary dance had been brought out.

I approached the groups and received and returned the usual greetings. I asked them if there was a dance on and they replied that they were going to a dance at Alel. I pointed out that it would be more prudent if they stopped at home and that it was asking for trouble if they encroached on Detwok's territory. To this they replied that they were going to dance and that if Detwok wanted to start anything, that was Detwok's affair and not theirs. Then I went to the chief, and told him that I had sent to Kodok for police and that

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Whatever the cause of death, burial follows at once except in the case of a king, when there is a short lying in state. If the deceased is a Nyireth or a chief, he is buried under the floor of his principal hut. A bull is killed, the meat of which is eaten by the grave-diggers, whilst the skin is cut into strips and woven across a quickly fashioned wooden, four-legged frame to make a bed or a bier. The body is washed and the head shaved. Arms, neck and waist are adorned with beads and a leopard skin fastened round the loins. The corpse is then rolled in a new white cloth and around this is bound a cow skin. It is then placed on the bed with a hen under the head. Meanwhile the work of digging the grave has been going on apace. This is a very difficult task, particularly in the dry season when the ground is as hard as concrete. The pit made is a very large one, since it has to accommodate the complete bier. It is taken down to a depth of six or seven feet and then a large cavity is cut in the side, large enough to contain the bed. The body resting on the bier is then lowered into the grave and fitted into the cavity. As this is being done the wailing of the women fills the air and the men salute the dead prince or chief, clashing their spears on their shields and singing songs in his praise. The principal wife takes two handfuls of sweepings from the floor and, standing with her back to the grave, throws them over her shoulders into the grave. Then she casts in two handfuls of mud, again standing with her back to the grave but with her hands by her sides, so that she throws the mud behind her. After the grave is filled in, all the mourners wash themselves in the river. They wear ropes round their necks as a sign of mourning, shave their heads and remove all beads and ornaments, and during the period of mourning should abstain from dancing. Four days after the burial the mourners gather again for the completion of the grave. Beer has been prepared and some if it is poured on the grave; the mound is then plastered over with mud and neatly smoothed and finished off. A short funeral dance follows after which all the mourners partake of the remainder of the beer.

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766 The final ceremonies take place after an interval of a month or two. Cattle, varying in number according to the [782] eminence and wealth of the dead man's family, are driven in for sacrifice and distribution, after being slaughtered, among the participants. The men of the district march in, [535] village by village, and perform the funeral dance, first encircling the village on the outside, then saluting the tomb of the deceased; they advance, clashing spear on shield, to kneel on one knee before the grave, then retire and finally encircle the village, this time on the inside, before giving place to the next company. The whole performance is accompanied by the thudding of the drums and the chanting of [533] the praises of Nyikang and the dead prince. This dance concludes all public remembrance of the dead man. No record is made or kept of the day or month of his death and so nothing in the nature of an anniversary ceremony takes place. The hut under which he is buried is allowed to fall into ruins and thus forms a tumulus over the grave. The place is then made [778] tidy and a reed or thorn fence erected around it to preserve it from profane use.

The household utensils of the dead man are either burned or buried on the day of the funeral, but the rest of 768 his property, including his wives—for they are reckoned as 428 his chattels for which he paid so many head of cattle—is inherited by his relatives according to the directions given by the deceased. If he left no instructions for the dividing of his goods everything belongs to his eldest son, but he is expected to give a share to his brothers and his father's principal male relatives, brothers and half-brothers. The dead man's spears, his canoe and the necklace of large white beads, a token of his dignity, belong to the eldest son absolutely.

764 The funeral of a common Colo and the consequent cere- [565] monies differ in some respects from those of a Nyireth. The body is washed and shaved and adorned with beads, but since no commoner is allowed to wear a leopard skin, the skin of a serval cat is fastened round the loins. If the dead

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person is a woman or a girl, a skirt is substituted for the skin, and for the girl some strings of yellow beads are added. If the family can afford it, it will buy a couple of yards of white cotton cloth to serve as a winding sheet and a cow skin is bound round this. The grave of a commoner is not dug in the hut itself but outside, near the compound. It is put near the surrounding reed fence, in a place where passers-by will not walk over it. As for a chief, the grave is excavated to a depth of about six feet but it is not nearly so wide, since the body is not buried lying on a bier, but is placed on the bare earth. The niche or alcove is cut out of the side, however, and a hen is placed under the head. [231] During the funeral the mourners wail in the customary manner, and this is the signal for the warriors, who hitherto have been out of sight in the cattle byre, to charge forward, armed as usual with spears and shields, to salute their dead comrade. [765] The grave is mudded over on the fourth day with the customary beer drinking and libation over the grave, and [782] the relatives abstain for a while from dancing and the use of [535] personal adornments. [201]

The mourning is not really completed, however, until the deceased person has been commemorated at a funeral dance. [765] This is a strict obligation upon the relatives, even though it [535] may be a year or more before it is fulfilled. Since the commoner is not sufficiently important or wealthy to be given a [527] dance all to himself, funeral dances are held periodically in the principal villages. The district turns up in force for these [628] communal 'All Souls' days, for besides the attraction of the dance—and any Shilluk will cheerfully walk miles just for the pleasure of a dance—there is also the extra treat of a share in the meat when the affair is over. Everybody who is commemorating his dead must give an offering, a bull if the [825] deceased is a man or a woman, a sheep if a child. The dance follows the pattern of the more important funeral dances. There is no tomb, however, so the drums mounted in forked sticks are made the focus of attention. The warriors, armed with spear and shield, make the customary encirclement of the village and then advance to the drums, chanting their

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765 songs the while. Since this is a more modest affair than the
535 dance for a prince or a chief, the whole company can remain in the arena during the whole afternoon. The matrons too, but not the young girls, take part in the dancing, marching in a small circle round the drums, some carrying a spear or a sword or a stick 'at the slope'.

[533] There is a pause in the proceedings and a sudden hush falls on the gathering. The song maker who all the afternoon has been leading the singing with tremendous voice and energy, now stands by the stilled tom-toms and chants the names of those who are being commemorated that day. The drumming and singing, the dancing and the marching recommence and continue until about an hour before sun-
[273] set. Beer in large quantities has been prepared for the hoarse and dust-choked warriors, and as they drink, the
765 cattle are distributed among the various villages taking part. Each beast is slaughtered near the hut of one of those whose death is the reason for the celebration, and the meat is divided by the village chiefs and portions allotted to different householders in each village. As one may well imagine, the
[578] division, first of the cattle and then of the meat, is not carried out in any spirit of amity and fraternal charity, but is accompanied by much wrangling and acrimony between village and village and individual and individual.

It is dark before everybody is satisfied, or rather, has got all that he is likely to get, and the dancers, some happily bearing a bloody burden, others grumbling at the smallness of their portion, stream along the road to their homes and supper. All obligations to the dead are satisfied; may they rest in peace.

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widespread, few have a sufficiency and fewer have any to spare for sale. Then the plight of the Shilluk is pitiful indeed.

Such a disaster occurred in 1945. The rains were sparse all over the country and failed almost entirely in the Upper Nile Province. In the Detwok area, after a promising start a prolonged drought set in and the young shoots withered and died. Hope revived when a heavy downpour of rain broke the drought and the people went out to plant again. But this second planting suffered the same fate as the first and as one scorching day followed another during the remainder of what was supposed to be the rainy season expectation slowly died, together with the wilting crops. The ruin was complete and, as we soon learned, was confined not merely to our own area or even to the Upper Nile but was general throughout the country.

In Detwok we were planning to open a Central School the following year and consequently had in hand a larger building programme than usual. The famine assured us of no scarcity of labour. Usually even though the crops are meagre there is no shortage in the months immediately following the harvest, and the Shilluk, careless for the future, gives himself over to the enjoyment of the fruits of his industry. Much of his precious grain is converted into beer and he dispenses and receives lavish hospitality at the many village dances with which the Shilluk celebrates the harvest. Not unnaturally the proposal that he should spend the next few months digging foundations or brickmaking or carrying water is received with a marked lack of enthusiasm, and we usually depend for our labour upon those improvident bachelors who have not bothered about a cultivation and who moreover are faced with the necessity of raising money to pay the annual poll tax.

This year, however, there was no need to be anxious about a shortage of workmen. Each Monday when the labourers were hired for the week the mission was besieged from before dawn by hundreds of men and women begging for a chance to be able to earn a few shillings. We were able to employ only a fraction of this crowd, and it was a thankless and an